

# The Status Report

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## MCSW Celebrates 100 Unsung Heroines of 2009



On May 13th more than 300 people gathered in the Great Hall of the Massachusetts State House to celebrate the 100 Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts. The honorees came from every corner of the Commonwealth to be recognized for their outstanding, selfless contributions to their organizations and communities. The ceremony was emceed by Channel 5's Liz Brunner.

This sixth annual Unsung Heroine event featured women who were carefully selected from nearly 400 nominations.

"Our Unsung Heroines are women who don't make the news, but make the difference in their communities."

They are the women who quietly, without fanfare or recognition, use their time, and talents to enrich the lives of others," said Kira Dunn, MCSW Executive Director.

The event included individual recognition for each of the 100 Heroines, a group photo on the Grand Staircase of the State House and a "Just Desserts" reception, featuring donations from Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Hamersley's Bistro, Jacqueline's Gourmet Cookies, Kickass Cupcakes, Polar Beverages, Spinelli's, Via Lago Café and Catering, and Whole Foods - Charles River Plaza.

This event was made possible through the support of Verizon, Bank of America, Covidien, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Teresa & H. John Heinz III Charitable Fund, Barbara Lee Family Foundation Fund at The Boston Foundation, American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts, Bethany Lutheran Church - Orange, MA, Boston Carmen's Union - Local 589, A.T.U., Bagel Alley of Nashua, NH, Corbett & Lalli Communications, House Speaker Robert DeLeo, Stacy A. Dixon, State Senator Ken Donnelly, Elizabeth & William Houlihan, Jacqueline's Wholesale Bakery, Inc., Senate President Therese Murray, State Representative George Peterson, Jr., State Senator Susan Tucker, and YWCA Central Massachusetts.

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## Executive Director Corner

Finally – good news! Great people doing commendable things, all in the name of making life in the Commonwealth better. The Unsung Heroine event hosted by the Commission at the State House was the unequivocal feel good event of the spring. As the names of the 100 honorees were read one by one, smiles got bigger, hearts warmed and we were all reminded about the very best in people. In the midst of such upheaval, this day honored the most precious of gifts anyone can give – time. Those who give freely of their time show true spirit and commitment – the Unsung Heroines of 2009 showed us both.

For the past six years the Commission has built the Unsung Heroine event into a unique signature at the State House – a moment in time where we all stop and reflect on the meaning of public service and marvel in the variety of ways our neighbors and colleagues give to their communities. We all respond to these moving types of events in different ways but what it did for me was it inspired me to reflect on ways to be the change I want to see in the world and distilled key lessons.



*Kira Dunn, Executive Director*

### **Here's my Top Ten:**

1. Accept responsibility – don't think it "It's not my job" – it IS my job!
2. Embrace the call to action: "If it's to be, it's up to me".
3. Don't wait for the right time to volunteer – do it now.
4. One individual can change an entire community.
5. Everything we do counts, even if it only matters to one other person.
6. Giving feels good.
7. Risk taking is part of it – many of the 2009 Heroines were "the first woman to ..."
8. There's always a solution out there – dreaming, innovation and creativity play vital roles in solution building.
9. Volunteering knows no limits – the 2009 Heroines ranged in age from 20 to 93!

And my number one lesson from the day:

10. Look around: there's inspiration everywhere!

Many people joined our Unsung Heroines in "giving" to make the day remarkable: companies who believe in philanthropy, pastry chefs, family of staff members and legislators working in the building who found an extra hour to join us in honoring their constituents.

Congratulations to all the honorees and thanks to all of you who joined us in celebrating these deserving women!

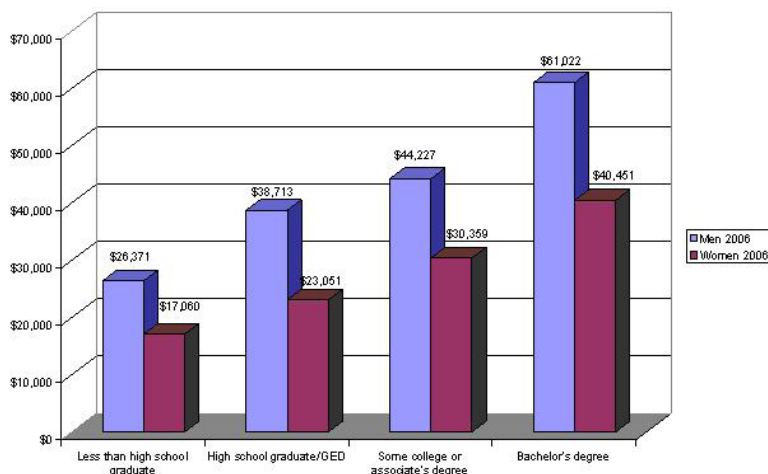
*They don't make the news...  
they make the difference.*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kira Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kira" and last name "Dunn" clearly distinguishable.

Kira Dunn, Executive Director

## Research Briefing Reveals Educational Disparities



In late May, MCSW Commissioners and staff attended “Overcoming Persistent Iniquities: Educational Disparities among Women in MA”, a State House briefing presented by Dr. Erika Kates of the Wellesley Centers for Women. While Massachusetts women rank second in the country of states where women hold a college degree and in 2006 ranked third in the nation in median earnings, the conversation has taken on a renewed relevancy. As Dr. Kates presented, the gender analysis of poverty and vulnerability entered into the national lexicon during the recent presidential election cycle and has had an unintended positive consequences of increased sensitivity and added attention to matters related to women and educational opportunities.

Economic crisis drives people back to school and thus, Dr. Kates’ timely presentation provided substantive research data to validate what many advocacy groups have already been saying: a work-first approach towards self sufficiency may not work for many low-income women, though extended training and educational programs do. Policy recommendations included flexible definitions for what is counted as an educational opportunity for low income women receiving benefits as well as an extension of the time they can take advantage of training programs, extension of related fundamental resources (add childcare!), and an education focused client orientation for case workers responsible for assisting to place low income women in either school or jobs.

‘The Status Report’ called for a “diaper ready” approach to utilizing federal stimulus funding to call attention to the need for childcare funding to accompany the ‘shovel ready’ jobs. Dr. Kates validated that this is a consistently identified strategy in assisting low income women to reach self-sufficiency. “A woman on public support who completes an education or training program and gets her first professional job can lose her child care voucher and ends up right where she started,” said Dr. Kates.

What You Can Do: Read about SB37, a senate bill, “The Workers Pathways to Self Sufficiency Act of 2009” which addresses several barriers faced by women and seeks to close the loop holes. This bill promotes educational advancement as a key strategy for individuals while enhancing the Commonwealth’s ability to remain competitive.

## June 3rd Public Hearing Cancelled

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women has **cancelled** the Northern Middlesex regional public hearing scheduled for Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6-7:30 p.m. at Girl’s Incorporated of Greater Lowell (220 Worthen Street, Lowell).

The goal of public hearings is to gather information from various regions around the Commonwealth and present findings to elected officials and legislators. Priority issues identified at the regional hearings will inform and guide the Commissions future efforts on behalf of Massachusetts’ women.

If you have any questions, please contact [mcsww@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsww@state.ma.us) or 617-626-6520.

## Human Resources Division Legislation Update

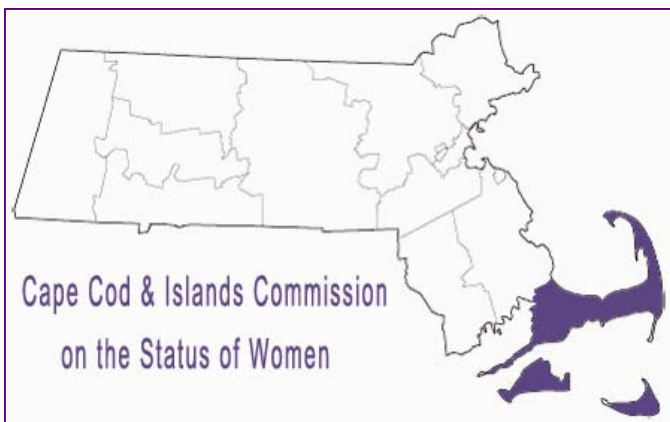
We are happy to report that the state’s Human Resources Division has initiated a study into the job classification system. At the same time, Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Alice Wolf, filed a complimentary bill adding a formal reporting system and implementation strategy.

This bill S1408/H2665 would require the state’s Human Resources Division to establish a job analysis study of state employees in the executive branch that updates the current job classification system and reviews titles, job specifications, organizational relationships and job qualifications to ensure that employee compensation, pensions, and benefits are free from gender and racial bias. It would also establish a Workforce Advisory Council of experts to assist the Human Resources Division with this work.



### 13 Appointed to Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women

The MCSW is proud to announce the following women as the inaugural Commissioners of the Cape Cod and Islands Commission on the Status of Women:



- Jan Barton of Barnstable
- Helen Bresnahan of Centerville
- Emily Gold of Falmouth
- Barbara Gookin of Nantucket
- Janet Joakim of Barnstable
- Susan Kadar of Truro
- Catherine King of South Dennis
- Cheryl Ossimo of Barnstable
- Pam Pollock of Bourne
- Deborah Thompson of South Dennis
- Janet Ulhar-Tinney of Eastham
- Elaine Cawley Weintraub of West Tisbury
- Evelyn Young of Cotuit

Together these thirteen Commissioners will work to monitor the status of women on the Cape and Islands and report their findings to the MCSW, its appointing authority. Along with the Cape Cod and Islands Commission the MCSW has assisted in establishing a **Berkshire County Commission** and a **Bristol County Commission**.

For more information on how to form a Regional Council or Commission in your area please contact the MCSW at [mcsw@state.ma.us](mailto:mcsw@state.ma.us) or 617-626-6520.



*BSC Dean of School of Graduate Studies Dr. William Smith, MCSW Commissioner Ruth N. Bramson, and BSC Coordinator of Women's and Gender Studies Dr. Diana Fox*

On April 29th, Commissioner Ruth Bramson presented the keynote address during the launch event for the Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate Program to be offered beginning next fall at Bridgewater State College (BSC), the first program of its kind offered at a Massachusetts state college.

Commissioner Bramson discussed the continued dominance of men in business and government leadership roles and the importance of increasing the numbers of women in these positions. She also acknowledged that, in order to continue to make progress, women in positions of power need to be willing to reach out and assist other women coming up in the ranks.

"Greater involvement in business leadership by women, increasing access, role models and better pay all lie in the way we prepare women to step up to challenges," Bramson said. "Using creative and innovative approaches to learning, you will reach women at all stages of their careers. With your outstanding faculty dedicated to providing knowledge, judgment and confidence, the students will chart their path to leadership and attain their career aspirations."

### Commissions Across the Commonwealth

#### **Quincy Mayor's Commission on Women**

On April 4, the **Quincy Mayor's Commission on Women** held their first financial summit for the community entitled "Empower Your Pocketbook; Making \$en\$e of It." Diane DiTullo Agostino from Metlife and Baystate Financial served as the keynote speaker and focused on financial security and independence. There were six informational tables providing information on the following topics: Credit Card Score/Debt, Dressing for Success, Resume Writing/Getting Back into the Workforce, You're Never Too Young to Plan for Retirement, Planning for College: Financial Aid and Stretching Your Dollar. A panel of five women business owners completed the day with a discussion moderated by Leanne Martin from the State Treasurer's Office.

**Take Action. Get Educated. Get Involved.**

If you are interested in becoming more involved in organizations focusing on women's issues across the Commonwealth you can start by attending any one of the number of events and meetings taking place in the coming weeks.

**Tuesday, June 2 (7:00 p.m.): Feminism & Dessert**

**Location:** 7 Temple Street (Cambridge)

**Details:** The Center for New Words will hold its monthly informal discussion on subjects that impact our daily lives. Come join Susan Campbell, author of *Dating Jesus: A Story of Fundamentalism, Feminism, and the American Girl* to talk about the culture of Fundamentalism. Admission is free. For additional information visit [www.centerfornewwords.org](http://www.centerfornewwords.org).

**Sunday, June 7 (7:30 a.m. - 1:30p.m.): 24th AIDS Walk Boston 2009**

**Location:** DCR Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade (Boston)

**Details:** Participate in AIDS Walk Boston, a grassroots community event benefiting the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts. This 6.2 mile walk raises money and support for AAC's programs, services and prevention efforts and to increase awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Massachusetts. For more information visit [www.aac.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AIDSWALK\\_homepage](http://www.aac.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AIDSWALK_homepage).

**Thursday, June 4 (Boston - 12:00 p.m.)/Friday June 5 (Worcester - 9:00 a.m.): Exploring Enterprise**

**Location:** 24 School Street, Seventh Floor (Boston) / 50 Elm Street, Second Floor (Worcester)

**Details:** The Center for Women & Enterprise will hold a workshop for those starting out or thinking about owning a business to discuss the commitments, risks and rewards of entrepreneurship. An overview of CWE courses, one-on-one consulting sessions, legal assistance, business plan preparation, women's business certification, financial literacy and marketing strategies will be discussed. These sessions are complimentary, but please RSVP to attend by calling 508-363-2300 (Worcester location) or 617-536-0700 (Boston location).

**Thursday, June 11 (7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.): Workplace Wellness Breakfast**

**Location:** Sheraton Framingham (Framingham)

**Details:** The Massachusetts Health Council Annual Meeting will present the business case for change by presenting data on the cost-effectiveness of developing a workplace wellness program and present actual programs that have been working for companies. They will also be honoring Representative Peter Koutoujian for his appointment as Chairman on Financial Services and thanking him for his many years of serving as Chairman of the Committee on Public Health. Member tickets are \$35, non-member tickets are \$45. For additional information and registration please visit [www.mahealthcouncil.org](http://www.mahealthcouncil.org)

**Friday, June 19 (8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.): Personal & Financial Survival Today**

**Location:** Harvard Business School (Cambridge)

**Details:** The Massachusetts Association of Women in Law Enforcement will hold its 6th annual conference hosted by the Harvard University Police Department. The conference will focus on individual finances, domestic violence and child abuse as related to finances and "red flag" stress related to law enforcement families. Massachusetts State Treasurer Timothy Cahill will perform the opening address. To register visit [www.mawle.org](http://www.mawle.org).

**June 26-28, 2009: 23rd Annual Summer Institute**

**Location:** Bentley University (Waltham)

**Details:** Please join the Women's Institute for Leadership Development for their Summer Institute on an inspirational weekend event that provides women with the leadership vision, confidence and skills to become more effective leaders and organizers in the Massachusetts labor movement. Tuition is \$220 and includes a double room, meals and materials for the weekend. For additional information please visit [www.wildlabor.org](http://www.wildlabor.org).

**Saturday, June 27 (9:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.): Massachusetts Conference for Women Veterans**

**Location:** [Holyoke Community College](http://www.holyokecommunitycollege.edu) (303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke)

**Details:** Come learn how yoga can help with PTSD symptoms and which state and federal benefits you may be eligible for and more at the first annual Massachusetts Conference for Women Veterans. The day's agenda will include workshops, exhibits, lunch, and speakers. The event is free but registration is required. Register by calling Panayiota Bertzikis at 617-210-5778 or going online to <http://www.mass.gov/vets/womensconference>.

For even more upcoming events please visit our online calendar at [www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm](http://www.mass.gov/women/calendar/upcoming.htm).

*Do you have an event you would like to see on this list in an upcoming issue of The Status Report? E-mail the details to Program Coordinator Kim Sebastiao at [Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us](mailto:Kimberly.Sebastiao@state.ma.us) and we will do our best to include your event in our next issue and/or on the MCSW's website calendar.*

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Member of the

